

Message Text

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ACTION EB-07

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-06 ISO-00 CAB-02 CIAE-00 COME-00

DODE-00 DOTE-00 INR-05 NSAE-00 RSC-01 FAA-00 L-02

IO-10 PA-01 PRS-01 USIA-06 /054 W

----- 105241

R 061115Z DEC 74

FM AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1949

INFO AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE COLOMBO 3390

EO 11652: N/A

TAGS: OGEN, ETRN, EAIR, ASAF, CE, US

SUBJ: CIVAIR -- MARTINAIR DC-8 CRASH DEC 4

REFS: A) COLOMBO 3367 B) STATE 267137

1. MILTON APONSO, DIRECTOR, DEPT OF CIVIL AVIATION,
TOLD EMBASSY OFFICER GSL WOULD WELCOME ACCREDITED REPRESENTATIVE
WHO WILL TRAVEL HERE
UNDER
ICAO STANDARD PROCEDURE. HE IS
CURRENTLY UNABLE TO SAY WHETHER NTSB LABORATORY FACILITIES
DESIRED BUT THANKS USG FOR OFFERING THEIR USE.

2. APONSO BROUGHT UP POINT THAT HIS OFFICE NOTIFIED FAA IN
ACCORDANCE WITH REGULATIONS MORNING OF DEC5 AND HE BELIEVES
NTSB REP IS TRAVELLING AS RESULT OF HIS MESSAGE.

3. WHEN EMBASSY OFFICER MENTIONED PROSPECTIVE ARRIVAL OF BATES
(PARA 3 REF B) APONSO SAID HE WANTED TIME TO CONSIDER ADVISABILITY
OF BATES' BEING ON SCENE. EMBASSY WILL ATTEMPT TO CONTACT BATES
ON ARRIVAL AND WILL OFFER APPROPRIATE ASSISTANCE.

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4. ALTHOUGH NOT DISCUSSED WITH APONSO OR OTHER GSL OFFICIALS,

TECHNICAL INVESTIGATORS COULD ENCOUNTER DIFFICULTIES BECAUSE OF EXTREMELY ROUGH TERRAIN AT CRASH SITE AND, ACCORDING PRESS REPORTS, LOCAL INHABITANTS' EXTENSIVE DISTURBANCE OR REMOVAL OF DEBRIS. PRESS IS ALSO SPECULATING ABOUT POSSIBLE JURISDICTIONAL CONFLICTS IN INVESTIGATION AMONG PRIMARY INTERESTED PARTIES, INCLUDING SRI LANKA, DUTCH, AND INDONESIAN GOVERNMENTS.

5. ACCORDING TO NEWSPAPER REPORTS, PLANE STRUCK MOUNTAIN AT ALTITUDE OF 5000 FEET AT SITE FIVE MILES DUE NORTH OF ADAM'S PEAK (APPROX 6 DEGREES/31 MINUTES NORTH, 80 DEGREES/31 MINUTES EAST).

6. THE SRI LANKA METEOROLOGICAL SERVICE HAS REFUTED EARLIER CEYLON BROADCASTING CORP STATEMENTS CONFIRMED BY RADIO SPOKESMAN TO EMBASSY OFFICER PRIOR TO TRANSMISSION REF A THAT HEAVY STORMS WERE IN AREA AT TIME OF CRASH. EYEWITNESSES ALSO REPORT VISIBILITY GOOD. COMBINATION OF HEAVY MISTS, ROUGH TERRAIN, AND INACCESSIBILITY HAVE, HOWEVER, DELAYED INVESTIGATION EFFORTS.

BYRNE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: AIRCRAFT ACCIDENTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 06 DEC 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: golinofr
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974COLOMB03390
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740354-0812
From: COLOMBO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19741255/aaaabvfy.tel
Line Count: 81
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EB
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: A) COLOMBO 3367 B) STATE 267137
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: golinofr
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 04 APR 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <04 APR 2002 by elyme>; APPROVED <15-Aug-2002 by golinofr>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CIVAIR -- MARTINAIR DC-8 CRASH DEC 4
TAGS: OGEN, ETRN, EAIR, ASAF, CE, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005